



THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA POSITION PAPER

The Garden Club of America supports independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulating responsible public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results. The Garden Club of America is a nonpartisan, issue-oriented advocate for a beautiful, healthy planet.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS

The United States maintains four public lands systems: the National Forest System, managed by the US Forest Service; the National Park System, managed by the National Park Service (NPS); the National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National System of Public Lands, managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Federal public lands are held in trust for all Americans and the GCA supports the goal of managing our lands for the long-term health of both the land and citizens.

While Forest Service and BLM lands permit uses such as logging and mining, NPS lands are specifically required by the Organic Act of 1916 to conserve park resources “unimpaired” for the enjoyment of future generations. The National Wildlife Refuge System is held to an even higher standard, reserved for the “conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats.”

Because all Americans are the beneficiaries of sound public lands management, The Garden Club of America advocates for resource protection and preservation as a top priority in public lands policy. Public lands sustain fish and wildlife and provide clean air and a source of water for all Americans. They also support local communities by providing millions of outdoor recreation jobs.

The Garden Club of America supports federal, state, and local legislation, policy, and individual action that address the following:

STEWARDSHIP

- Prioritize management practices that mitigate the effects of climate change, foster biodiversity, and protect native plant communities and endangered species.
- Connect public and private lands to create wildlife corridors for migration of plants and animals.
- Encourage the use of native plants and prevent, control, and eradicate invasive species with minimal use of toxic herbicides.
- Employ adequate land use planning techniques that maximize wildlife corridors and habitat, encourage recreation, and preserve historic and cultural resources.
- Replace, where feasible, aging infrastructure with natural infrastructure and environmentally sound alternatives.
- Provide adequate financial support for the agencies that manage public lands to ensure that qualified personnel, including plant scientists, are available to adequately steward the lands.
- Encourage a review of ways to improve revenue generation in and self-funding of public lands.

LAND CONSERVATION

- Increase the pace of overall land conservation efforts, both public and private, to protect ecological resources.
- Encourage collaboration between government managers and private owners of parcels adjacent to public lands and provide incentives for such landowners to follow good conservation practices.
- Support federal and state tax incentives for private conservation of adjacent or infill holdings of land.

- Support planning efforts that rebuild/utilize brownfield areas rather than converting open space for development purposes.
- Provide full, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965 and use the federal portion of the funding for its intended purpose.

ENFORCEMENT

- Support landmark environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act.